

SHRIEKING VICTIM OF
THE VAMPIRE'S CURSE

HORROR STORIES

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TERROR FROM
THE
MUMMY'S EYES

Death
is not
forever—

**"I WAS
RAISED
FROM THE
GRAVE!"**



THE HOWLING DEMON WHO HUNGERED FOR BLOOD

HORROR STORIES

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**Gabriel Varney
Presents:**

SWEET VIOLETS OF DEATH!

by GABRIEL VARNEY

"STARK RAVING MAD! That's just how I feel right now. It just doesn't add up, Mr. Varney, because the last person to live in this house died here over seventy years ago."

"Most fascinating, Mr. Whimbly," I managed to gasp, "but do you think you could climb a bit slower, please? I'm not as young as I used to be and these steps are rather steep. There—that's better. The room will still be around when we reach it."

"Sorry, Mr. Varney, but I'm awfully anxious for you to experience this—it's quite the most exciting thing that has ever happened to us!"

We were climbing the creaking stairs leading to the third floor of a dilapidated old house. Each of the rooms we passed was stuffy, close, reeking of damp walls and stagnant air. And the faded wallpaper came off in large squares when either of us happened to brush by.

"Lovely old place, Mr. Whimbly. It has what the real estate brokers call 'charm' and 'atmosphere.'" I carefully stepped over a pile of evil-smelling debris blocking a doorway. "Whatever are you going to do with it?"

Whimbly smiled ruefully. "I know it's a sight, but it can be fixed up. All right. Here's the room I was telling you about."

Rather melodramatically he flung open the door and

(Continued on page 8)



A bobby is standing in front of G. Whimbly's haunted townhouse.

ushered me inside. Just a small chamber with sunlight fitfully shining through holes in the boarded-up windows; no furniture, nothing to mark it in any way different from possibly thousands of other long-empty rooms—until . . .

"That's it, Mr. Varney, fill your lungs."

Again I breathed the dusty air and once more that faint fragrance hit me—"Violets!"

"Thank God you can smell them too! My wife can't and thinks I'm 'working too hard' or something—all polite ways of saying she thinks I've gone batty. And for a while there, I really did think I was crazy. First of all, it's in the middle of winter; second, nobody has been in this room for years; and third, the odour is quite strong, not like real violets at all." Whimbley paused long enough to scratch his head. "I was positive for the longest time that somebody had spilled some bath powder or perfume and the fragrance stuck to the walls, but as you can see, I've washed everything down with a strong lye solution—and the smell is still there!"

"Yes, I realize it," I said, sniffing the air again. "Violets. They were my dear wife's favourite flower. Colour too. She had all her soap, bath salts, cologne, everything in that fragrance—but you could always tell there was something artificial about the scent, something faintly metallic behind it. No, these are real flowers that are giving off the smell."

"But I don't see how. Why, you'd need hundreds of flowers to have the scent as strong."



The odour of ghostly violets first appeared in this third-floor room.

"You're perfectly right, of course, but by 'real flowers' I didn't mean the kind you can pick."

"Then what other kind is there, pray," Whimbley asked with a trace of sarcasm in his voice.

"The supernatural sort. There are two words in the English language that are used interchangeably—'ghost' and 'apparition.' And because 'apparition' has more syllables and looks fancier in print, writers use it when specifying an especially elegant ghost."

"So what? There are many kinds of words like those."

"Yes, but let me finish. A 'ghost' is the after-image of a deceased human person clanking down stairs,

you think, 'Oops, there are flowers about.'"

"That's all very obvious and yet doesn't explain a damned thing."

"Don't be so impatient, my boy. You'll understand it all in due time. Now where was I—oh, yes, about the smell. Your violets are supernatural after-images just like a clanky thing on the stairs, but act in a different manner. Whatever force field is causing the odour to be trapped upstairs, sends the wave images directly into your brain. The next time you're in that room, hold your breath—I'll bet you any amount of money you can still smell the flowers."

"And my wife?"

A broken heart of long ago, flowers, and a poem by Shelley all team up to give our Ghost Hunter his most exciting case in the Supernatural!

wearing white sheets, frightening servants—and the whole run of clichés which may, or may not, be true. An 'apparition' on the other hand, is also an after-image—but not necessarily that of a person. It can be of an animal, an object, a particular sound—or a smell!"

"In other words, then, a ghost is a kind of apparition."

"Exactly. As an apple is a kind of fruit. Your house is haunted by the smell of violets."

We turned to leave, but on the stair Whimbley again stopped me. "So why can't my wife smell the flowers? She's been here when I have."

Putting on my coat, I answered, "Don't worry about that. If you remember your genetics, there's a certain chemical that some people can taste and that others can't. This ability or inability is hereditary. The same goes for an ability to roll one's tongue, to wiggle one's ears, the same as it is for the colour of eyes and hair, body structure, and everything else. In a case like the one you've got upstairs," I said, buttoning my coat, "nothing follows ordinary practices. Outside in the real world, vibrations strike the senses from the exterior. Let's say someone yells; the sound goes into your ears, through all those tubes and channels, and into your brain where the waves are registered as someone's voice. Fragrance follows the same principles. Violets give off a certain smell, it goes into your nose and up into the brain where

"She doesn't have the ability to be a receptacle. Can you cross your eyes? Well, neither can I. It's just something we can't do. And it holds true with your wife. She hasn't got the inherent factor within her to be able to sense the presence of your supernatural bouquet."

"Can you tell me what causes this mysterious fragrance?"

"Only if I can discover something of the history of this house. Then, with luck, I'll be able to piece together an explanation—but that will take time and right now it's growing rather late."

We walked out the front door. "How did you ever manage to get this property?" I asked, turning up the collar of my coat.

"Well, this whole row of houses belonged to one old man who died a long time ago. His will was contested by several relatives and it's been in the courts for over fifty years. Naturally the property fell into disrepair and when the last relative died several months ago, leaving no heirs, the State took it over. I bought this house quite cheaply. And I believe the others have been sold too."

"Sounds like that case in Dickens' *Bleak House*—Jarvis vs. Jarvis, I think. By the time the case was settled, there wasn't any money left—it all went into legal actions, suits and counter-suits. When everybody's greedy, nobody ends up with anything to show for it."

"Yes. These were nice houses

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SHRIEKING VICTIM OF THE VAMPIRE'S CURSE

by WILLIAM ARNES

Just a make-believe world of a Grade B horror movie—but after the sun had set, who dared tell truth from our fantasy!

"O KAY, TAKE A BREAK, Wendell. Marge," Cameron said, "Give me some rush prints on this roll."

Cameron Hall slipped the light meter from his neck and glanced around his studio. Another bum campaign for another failing production house, he thought disgustingly.

He watched as Wendell removed the plastic fangs and slung his cape over the Barca-Lounger near the pole lamp. Cameron sighed.

"Here are the first prints, Cam," Marge said. She was standing close to him and he put his arm around her shoulders, drawing her near. Her soft blonde hair drifted across his forehead as he nuzzled her neck.

"Easy, lover boy," Marge cautioned. "I thought we had an agreement."

"Not during business hours," he said, mimicking the sound of her voice. "Okay. But give me a kiss to fight off the nausea. This Wendell is for the birds."

"You mean for the bats. As a vampire, well . . . I'd be more frightened by a Girl Scout selling brownies."

A slight grin played over Cameron's lean features. He hunched his shoulders slightly, shifting his head left and right to focus the available light on the dripping prints.

"Scrap this set of rushes,

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kitten," Cameron said. "His acne shows in prints three through nine, and thirteen. Hey Wendell!" Cameron waited for the face to appear around the corner of the dressing room. "Don't shuck the clothes. We have to re-shoot. But take five anyway."

"What else is on the agenda, Marge? I just hope Continental Pictures isn't depending on Wendell's good looks to get the kiddies flocking into the theater."

"You have Wendell here until three, then you're doing a photo spread on Maria Bonay. At five-fifteen, you're having dinner with Ken McGriffin . . ."

"Can we cut that out?"

"Negative," she answered. "You cancelled twice before already."

"Okay, the rest."

"That's it. Dinner at the McGriffins never lasts less than five hours. So your night is well-nigh shot."

"And how about your evening?"

"I have an engagement."

"With who?" Cameron asked, his voice combining equal parts of annoyance, frustration and a seasoning of jealousy.

"A mutual friend."

"Any man cutting in between us is no mutual friend."

"But you have nothing to worry about, Cameroh."

"Let's stop with the guessing games. Who is the lucky fella?"

"Wendell . . ."

"Wendell?! . . ." Cameron shouted.

"Coming," came the anxious reply. "You said to take five . . ."

"Three and a half is enough. We're behind schedule and now Marge is behind the eight ball."

"I don't understand," Wendell said softly. His body leaned slightly as if he were crouching in mental retreat.

Oh Wendell, speak up for once in your life, Marge thought disgustedly. I mean, you did ask me out and I accepted. Now the least you can do is to stand up for yourself.

"Marge," Cameron snorted. "You, Marge and dinner. But I won't make your shooting session any harder. The hell I won't. Now you get your backside into your outfit NOW!" Cameron roared.

Wendell raced over to the bright studio lights and began to posture before the camera. Cameron glanced at his light meter, then focused the Hasselblad and danced before the bright stage, humming with the hisst-click of the winding mechanism.



He spread his cloak and smiled. "I bid you welcome to our world."

Marge ran her hands through her blonde tresses. Dinner would be agonizingly long tonight, she knew, both for her and Cameron.

"**W**HERE ARE we going for dinner, Wendell?"

"Huh?" he paused to glance her way before turning his gaze to the winding ribbon of concrete leading out of the city.

"Dinner? Remember?" Marge fought hard to keep her self-control. Why was this man so impossible to know? His shyness, his bumbling speech and mannerisms, all began to wear on Marge's nerves.

"A friend of mine has a small house on the bay not five miles from here. I didn't think you'd mind if we had dinner there."

"No, I don't mind," she said, knowing that she did mind very much.

"Fine. I didn't think you would. They're cooking up something very special for us. I told them all about you."

Not that there's too much to tell, Marge thought. She glanced out of

the passenger window and watched the curve of the sandspit out on the bay. The moon, in its three-quarter phase, turned the flecks of water to dull silver. Her eyes focused briefly on tangled masses of driftwood clogging the shore. She shivered.

"Tell me about your friends, Wendell."

His eyes brightened. "Oh, they're old friends of the family. From the old country."

"I don't understand, Wendell. I thought you were an American citizen."

"Oh, I am but mother and father from old country," he said softly, his voice shifting into broken English.

Ho ho, Marge thought. "Anyway, when these people heard I was in pictures, well almost in pictures, they insisted I come out to dinner. I thought you might like to meet them."

"I'm dying to," Marge answered. "Better than I'd hoped."


"What? I'm sorry I didn't catch that . . ."

"I said I'm glad you could come."

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**Death is
not Forever--**





"I WAS RAISED FROM THE GRAVE!"

by EARL MARTIN as told to FRANKLIN CHASE

"WELL, WHICH IS IT? Do you want to live or die?"

"Live. I want to live."

"Fine," Victor Young said. A terrible grin distorted his features. "The woman's name is Joan Michaels. I want her head tomorrow morning."

"You're not serious," I gasped.

"Just make sure she's dead. And don't try to smuggle her out of this city, my friend, because my contacts will inform me of that fact."

"If you're such a powerful man, Victor, why not have one of your henchmen do the job?"

"Because, Earl, they cannot execute you for this crime. You're dead already. But be forewarned. If you do not comply with my wishes, I shall forget your appointment for survival. Think it over. After all, it's your . . . it's your life, isn't it?"

I had no choice, really. If I wanted to walk this earth I had to do Victor Young's bidding. He had made that abundantly clear when I awakened in the small furnished room near his laboratory.

My bones ached as I shifted on the small bed. Just two days ago, the airplane I had been ferrying (Cont'd on page 16)



Having power over death, I found it easy to murder and not fear the hangman's noose.

from Las Vega to Los Angeles had smashed into a cliff in the Rockies. I recalled the tortured scream of overstressed metal as the airplane crumbled into a ball and tumbled down the sheer rock wall. When I came to, I was Victor Young's prisoner.

"That was some crash you had, young man," Victor said. "I'm glad you survived."

"It's good to be alive."

He smiled. "Actually a poor choice of words. You see, you are really dead."

"And this is some kind of dream and you're a mad doctor," I fumed. "Tell me another."

"I'll do better than that. I shall prove it to you. Here."

He handed me a stethoscope and helped me slip the plugs into my ears. He pushed my tattered shirt aside and placed the metal

instrument against my chest.

"It doesn't feel cold?"

"No."

"Do you hear anything?"

"No, I don't."

"Of course you wouldn't. Dead men have no heartbeats."

"And you've got a bum instrument here," I said, flinging the stethoscope to the floor. Victor caught it at the end of the bed and placed it against his chest.

"Now listen."

I hear the thump-thump of his heart but I wasn't convinced. He saw it in my eyes.

"Come over to the mirror. That's all right. You can walk."

I climbed out of bed and walked into the bath room. We stood face to face next to the full-length mirror behind the door.

"Now," Victor instructed, "we shall have a little contest. When I

count to three, hold your breath. Let us see who will last longer."

It was no contest. Victor turned red and exhaled in one loud gasp. As he gulped air, I remained still. And then it hit me. I wasn't breathing at all. The surprise showed on my startled face.

"You don't have to breathe. And nothing can hurt you. Look." He slashed at my arm with the razor blade he had palmed from the sink's rim. The sharp steel cut through my arm, but there was no pain, no blood and no mark.

"Your skin is impervious to injury, just as you are. I could demonstrate by firing a gun into your chest from point-blank range, but that would do nothing more than make a loud noise. However, we are not finished. If you will just step this way."

(Continued on page 48)

THE ARMY OF MARCHING CORPSES

by JOHN D. CRAIG

THE DIVER'S leaded boots touched the bottom, sank into the mud. Then he saw them! Men in tattered uniforms, rows of them. They moved like soldiers, as though keeping step to some inaudible, ghostly music."

I had my audience, there was no question about it. They were listening with fascination, if a certain amount of disbelief. It was an informal get-together at the skeptical Adventurer's Club in Chicago. We were spinning yarns, swapping experiences—and because I'm a diver, they'd asked me for a diving story. I was happy to oblige.

"The way I first heard of it, some Russian divers brought word of this strange terror. They were sitting around, the way we are now, talking of danger and death, but then one of the divers said he'd gone down in Odessa Harbor, seeking the body of a doctor, reportedly drowned. The other divers looked at him oddly, and asked if

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Many fathoms under the sea there exists a race of creatures who, no longer living, are not dead!

he'd recovered the doctor's body, if he'd had any success.

"No," he said. "Those waters are accursed. Live men die there, and dead men . . ." he shrugged his shoulders eloquently, "come to life."

"His friends stared at him—about the way you're staring at me—some of them, unlike you, had heard of this before but some of them hadn't, and tried to question the diver but he wouldn't answer. He ordered another drink and shrugged off all questions.

"I laughed at it when I heard it, for it sounded to me like another one of those stories that grows with repetition, until any resemblance to truth it might have once had got lost in the telling and retelling. He'd probably gone down and seen another group of divers, distorted and multiplied by the muddy water and his own imagination. That is, I laughed until I mentioned it, some time later, to a Russian I happened to meet, a former Black Sea sailor. He didn't laugh.

"I've heard of them. I left the country a long time ago, but I've heard of them," he said. "They were not divers, as you think, you can be sure of that. They were drowned men in ragged clothes, with frightful faces. They lived down in the mud—no, don't tell me it's nonsense, I know."

"Divers died after meeting the Marching Dead, died horribly, on land, and soon none would go down."

"That seemed like a straight clue, so I pressed him for details, but he couldn't give me any more information."

"Of course." It was a mountain climber speaking. "You divers are always seeing things. A little queer in the head, if you ask me. But you must be to start with, to spend your time underwater."

"Wait," I said. "It gets worse. The story interested me, so I began asking people, trying to pick up more information. One day, I found a Navy man who helped it along.

"Odessa?" "Oh, yes, he knew of it. And about the Marching Dead who lived at the bottom of the harbor. He gave me some background.

"When all Russia was in a state of

terror, he said, and the Romanoffs had been slain in a cellar in Ekaterinburg, and the Kerensky Government was overthrown, madness had raged in Odessa, with rival parties and factions pillaging the city, killing one another and struggling for control, until the Bolsheviks took over the government and restored order of a sort.

"After the Armistice, a British destroyer tore through the Black Sea and cast anchor in the deep clinging mud of Odessa Bay, preparatory to docking. The first effort to move the ship to its berth resulted in the loss of an anchor. So the destroyer dropped a diver over to locate the anchor.

"Odessa Bay is not deep, but the bottom is very soft, and into the water for many years has been spewed the wastes of chemical, tin plate, and other factories. The diver stirred up masses of murky substances as he moved in his work.

"Suddenly he felt, rather he saw, movement just beyond his range of vision. He advanced toward it deliberately and got the shock of his life.

"There coming toward him in the murky depths of the Black Sea, was a company of marching men—dead men, marching as though to meet him.

"Some wore tattered uniforms, some were in civilian clothes. They were moving slowly, as though they feared that if they moved quickly they would be carried upward, to the surface.

"Many of them were bearded, but others showed faces cadaverously clean. And they were coming toward him, with arms outstretched!

"On the destroyer's deck, they felt the tug of the cables, and hoisted the diving officer aboard. He was senseless when the helmet was unscrewed. The doctors went to work on him, and when he came to, he told them what he had seen."

I stopped, because I had to. That was about all I knew, at the time.

"You can believe me or not," I said. "I do. During World War II, I was stationed for a while in the Mediterranean Theater. I got friendly with some British sailors, and visited aboard *H.M.S. Whitehall*, where I heard the same story. She was the destroyer that lost her anchor in Odessa Bay."

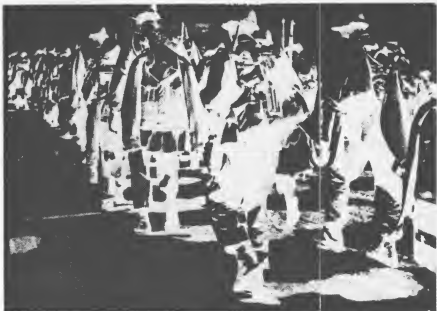
"Bah!" said my friend. "I thought you were a scientist, not a romancer. This is just a story, without proof."

"Yes," I said. "But I like it and I believe it. I've run into it in too many places."

"You believe it because you want to believe it," he said.

We went on to talk of other things. I knew some of the Adventurers sided with my mountain climbing friend from the odd looks I received, and a few remarks thrown my way.

(Continued on page 56)



The waves have covered them—yet they march to the bottom of the sea.



THE HOWLING DEMON WHO HUNGERED FOR BLOOD

by MICHAEL PRAETORIUS

"**H**URRY! Not a moment's to be lost. We must rid the world of this foul being."

"Have you the tinder, the sticks, the cords of wood?"

"Yes, yes—and more besides. Quickly now. Half you mengo to the other side of the house. Begin laying the tinder. We shall stay in front and see that this disgusting creature does not try to flee the flames."

Inside the plain structure, a young man cowered in a corner, his unearthly features contorted in fear.

"Help me, O Father. *Salvum fac populum tuum, Diabole*—save thy people, Satan. Preserve me so that I may survive to carry out your noble purpose on earth. *Exaudi orationem meam*—hear my plea!"

He whirled

around. Smoke was pouring in through every fissure and crack of the room.

"The end grows near, Father. Audite!" Coughing cut off his final prayer. Billowing smoke and bright, sparkling flames danced all about him.

Staggering to his feet, he stumbled down into the cellar. He leaned his forehead against the cool, rough stones and groaned. Acrid fumes were filling his lungs; he could scarcely see; above him, he heard part of the flooring collapse and give way as the fire ate its way further and further into his house. The young man clawed at the stones until finger tips were bloodied.

"Help me," he sobbed quietly just as the rest of the ceiling fell in.

"Thanks be to God!" The cry rose above the crackling inferno, echoed in the low-slung hills and rebounded off the mountains.

"Are you sure he didn't escape?" someone shouted.

"Yes, nothing could survive that flaming holocaust. We have triumphed over evil. It is done!"

TREES GREW in wild profusion. Vines, shrubs, flowers covered every inch of exposed earth. A quiet stream gently rippled nearby. Its soothing melody and the singing of birds were the only sounds that ever cut the silence of a calm existence. Occasionally a deer came down from the high grounds to drink the crystal waters, then scampered away into the brush. Years merged into centuries as time seemed to have been banished from the face of the earth. But the beauty



It's hard to imagine this gentle setting as the seat of Satanic power—but don't be fooled by it.

of this world does not last forever.

The town, at first a tiny settlement five miles away, began to expand. It needed space, room, places for new houses and schools and businesses, until gradually the noise of the felling of trees was heard shattering off the face of

Just a tiny drop of water separated our land from this Evil!

time-worn cliffs.

Men came into the valley—strange men who wore sweat-stained khaki clothing. They brought tools with them—saws that worked of themselves, powders compressed into sticks that could destroy even the mightiest of trees, vehicles that needed no horses to move them.

The brush was cleared away, exposing the naked dirt for the first time in two hundred years . . .

"Jim! Come here—on the double!"

A young man dropped his T-square and walked rapidly in the direction where a crowd of men was already assembling.

"What's up?"

"Just take a look at this," Bob Francis, the foreman, poked the dirt with his boot.

"That's strange," Jim murmured, squatting to have a closer look. "Seems like there was some sort of fire or something—the earth's scorched. Let's get some shovels and see what's going on."

Eager hands soon went to work on the mound of root-tangled dirt. Within half an hour what appeared to be a wall of stone was uncovered.

"I believe a house stood here once," Bob said. "And here's what's left of it—the basement and foundation."

"We can clear it out and use it to store our equipment," one of the worker's suggested. "It'll offer more protection than the tarps will."

"Good idea," agreed Jim. "Let's get cracking."

But when they were alone, he mentioned to Bob, "You know, this is really strange. No one ever lived in these parts before—at least that's what the bank told us."

"Yeah, it is pretty weird. Why don't you ask Sue about it? You'll be seeing her tonight, won't you?"

He was—and he did. Sue Charles was a "townie" and worked as a secretary in the bank owning the

strip of land Jim and his crew were clearing. Jim had to see quite a lot of her during working hours and found himself wanting to be in her company after five, too. And she wasn't opposed to the idea.

"We made quite a discovery today, honey. Right smack in the middle of the woods, we found the ruins of an old house."

"Now isn't that the oddest thing! I never knew anybody lived so near the hills. But couldn't it be a hunter's shelter or something?"

"Nope, not a chance. When he finally cleared out the hole—it was filled, packed solid with branches and dirt—we measured it. The house must have been a fairly good-sized one—much too large for a hut or shed. And there were also several half-burned planks."

"Hmm—I wonder when it was built."

"I checked that out, too. From the kinds of stone and the type of mortar, my guess would be sometime before the beginning of the eighteenth century."

"I've got an idea—let's ask Aunt Maud about it. She's quite an expert on Shaftbury's early history."

"Well, OK—but remember the movie starts at eight o'clock."

"Silly, don't worry. She lives across the street, remember? And it'll only take a second."

They left Sue's house and stepped out on the porch. "Such a lovely night," Sue sighed softly and hugged Jim's arm. "And there's a full moon, too."

"And there's also a stupid old broad hanging out the window watching us. How are you, my dear!" he cheerfully called.

"Jim! She'll hear you. And Sarah Grubber's not one to stand an insult."

"Sarah Grubber? Wow, right out of Dickens. She looks like her name, too. Oops, still staring. But I don't care. I want everybody to know I'm in love with the most beautiful girl in the world."

"Thanks, sweets, but do try to hold off until later. Besides, we're already at Auntie's house." She knocked on the door.

They were ushered in by a sweet, kindly old woman. And later, when seated in a quaint front parlor, Jim asked her about the ruins.

Maud's brow clouded. "Yes, I know of it. But first I want to tell you something—both of you." She paused to consider her next sentence. "Shaftbury is a nice town filled with fine, hard-working people. You know that, Sue. You've lived here all your life."



"But, Aunt Maud, what is it? I've never seen you so upset before." Sue got up and sat beside the older woman. She held her hand.

Maud smiled tightly, then continued. "The sins of the father will not be brought down upon the sons. Remember that." She cleared her throat. "All right. In the 1690's all of New England was beset by what the historians gleefully dismiss as the 'Salem Madness.' We've had a taste of it ourselves during the McCarthy era of the 1950's—but I won't talk politics now.

"Our Puritan ancestors hunted out and imprisoned hundreds of people accused of witchcraft. Not many were executed—only about nineteen, I believe—but no one was safe from having that dread charge put against him. If a man's cow died or his horse became lame, it was witchcraft at work; if he had a grudge against his neighbor, that man was in league with the Devil; if his child died, evil spirits had come with the express purpose of carrying the poor baby away. It all seems silly now, but back then it was deadly serious."

"But all this happened in Salem, Aunt. Not here."

Maud stared steadily at her niece. For a full minute, then: "Is that so?" In a quiet voice, "That burned-out cellar didn't just grow there."

"You mean our ancestors murdered someone?"

"Yes," Aunt Maude sighed. "A poor, innocent young man whom nobody seemed to like. They trapped him and forced the youth to take refuge in his own house. The villagers burned it around his ears. Naturally, he died—horribly, I imagine."

"But why, how could they do such a terrible thing?" Jim cut in.

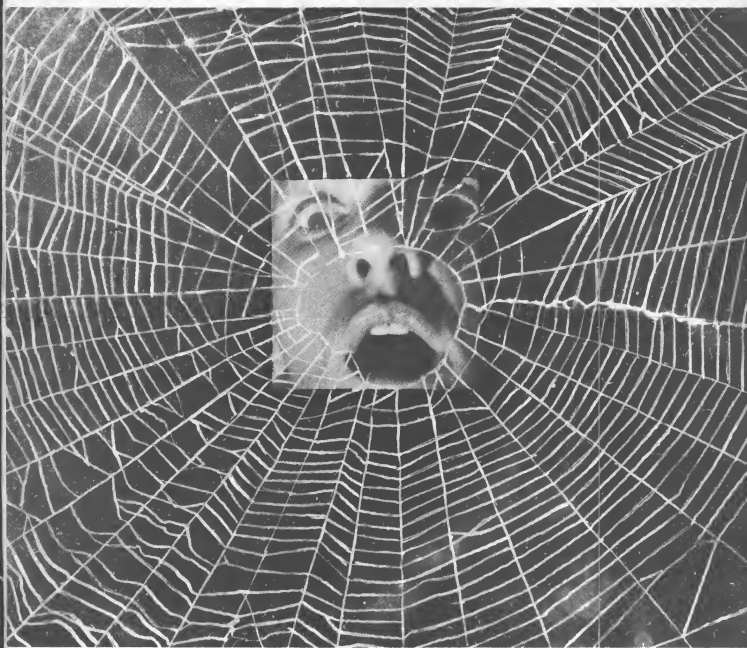
"An epidemic of smallpox combined with a serious drought—I don't know. Pick any reason you like."

"And why were we never taught this in school?"

"Because very few people know about it, Sue. Ten years after it happened, in the early part of the 1700's, even Cotton Mather himself, one of the three judges at the Salem trials recanted his decisions and on bended knees implored the forgiveness of God for his crimes against humanity, decency and compassion. You can imagine how our ancestors felt—torn with guilt. Originally the town was a great deal closer to those pitiful ruins, but

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"GIANT SPIDERS



ARE ATTACKING

OUR TOWN!"

Chemical weapons
released in the
desert gave these
foul things life!

by AVERY WEST

MIKE McGUIRE lay face down on the mesquite-dotted plain. He could hear the sounds of hushed whispering off to his left. When a sand louse crawled into his ear, he bit his lip to keep from squirming.

"Quiet, Harry!" A voice hissed. "If that thing hears us, we're goners."

McGuire smiled bitterly. Didn't the fool know that spiders couldn't hear? You could be lying ten yards from one of the hairy beasts, shouting at the top of your lungs, and you'd be safe. You just had to remember not to move.

"Come on," a second man said. "The coast is clear. I'm not going to lie in that ditch forever."

McGuire turned his head slightly and watched in amaze-

ment as the two men rose from the shelter of the culvert and began to run across the moon-drenched sand. He could almost hear their huffing as they raced to the salt mine entrance.

He didn't hear the approach of the spider, but the awesome black shape suddenly blanked a portion of the landscape. McGuire heard the first agonizing scream and turned his head, realizing that the spider was concentrating on his prey. The giant insect was still too close for him to make it to the mine, so he watched in horror, unable to turn his eyes from the grisly sight.

Screams broke the stillness of the desert night as the tarantula knelt gracefully and snapped up the first man in its needle-sharp mandibles. A short, gurgling grunt of surprise came from the man's lips before he died. The second figure

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backed away, then turned and continued his dash for safety. Before he gained ten yards, a hairy leg lashed out and flung him to the hard-packed sand. McGuire could hear the snap of the man's spine.

"You damned fools," McGuire muttered. Spider's can't hear, but your running footsteps felt like an express train to them.

McGuire watched the spider drain the man's body juices, then fling the shrunken corpse to the side. The black shape then seized the second corpse and slowly walked across the crest of a dune, pausing to survey its domain. Satisfied that no other "insects" were in the immediate area, the spider shuffled across the sand and out of sight.

McGuire looked up and scanned the desert around him. He shifted his head slightly, being careful to lift it from the ground when he did so. Be careful, his mind told him. He rose slowly to his feet, then measured the distance to the mine entrance. The hole in the mountain was not more than five feet high by seven feet across, much too narrow for the gigantic insects running rampant near Cottonwood, Nevada.

Before he could think about it, his legs flexed and he began running. He concentrated on the black hole in the mountainside; his lungs ached with the effort. C'mon McGuire, his mind screamed, run faster, faster faster. The mine entrance seemed to waiver and shift in the distance and he cursed himself for having overestimated the yardage to safety.

"Hurry. Run faster."

He paused for a split-second. Was his mind calling to him in a woman's voice? Impossible . . . and yet. Yes, there she was, in the cave mouth. A girl or a woman? McGuire strained his eyes in the darkness and increased his speed when he heard the girl scream.

There is no doubt about it, he thought grimly. Something is behind me.

He raced on, not daring to pause, lest a mis-step make him easy prey. Suddenly he was at the safety of the entrance and he flung his body sideways and slid under the overhanging rock lip. His chest collided with the girl and they tumbled in a heap seven feet from the outside.

"A pleasure bumping into you," McGuire quipped. The girl screamed again. Turning, McGuire saw a hairy leg inching into the small opening. He glanced about him wildly and grasped a cracked

stalagmite, wrenching it from the wall of the mine. Shielding the girl with his body, he turned to face the searching probe.

"Come and get it, boy," McGuire said. He stamped his foot and waited for the spider to trace the vibration. The leg swept toward him and he glimpsed the foot-long bristles and the sharp spines of the tarantula. He could imagine the chomping mandibles waiting for him outside should he become impaled on the spines.

Tarantulas! And these disgusting monsters sought only human prey!

A grim smile curled his lips as he slammed the stalagmite into the hairy mass. Silently it writhed, then broke loose. McGuire jabbed again, pinning the leg to the floor of the mine. It wriggled, tugged, then tore loose, leaving a jagged rip in the spider's leg. The insect withdrew, leaving a large stain of brownish-green body fluid. There was no sound.

"It's gone," she said.

"The hell it is. It's waiting."

As if in answer, a soft hissing filled the night. McGuire glanced at the opening and saw shiny strands drifting across the opening. They glided length- and cross-wise, sealing them inside. McGuire felt the girl shivering next to him. He stepped closer to the cable-like material and grabbed the girl as she tried to touch it.

"DON'T BE a fool," he yelled. McGuire touched the cables with his weapon. It stuck fast and a black leg reached out and swiped the stalagmite from the web.

"Well, that spider's got a toothache for sure," he said. "Now suppose we introduce ourselves. I'm Mike McGuire, formerly Trooper McGuire of the Nevada State Police."

"I'm Liz Miller. My father . . . my father . . ." She broke into sobs.

"Take it easy. I know this is rough on you . . . Would you like a cigarette?"

"No, thank you. My father owned

Miller's Emporium in town. He tried to get me away when these things came. He said we had better split up, that we'd have more of a chance that way. He told me that the mine would be safe. But Dad never got here."

"Do you know anything about these spiders?"

"No, they came yesterday. Oh, it was awful."

McGuire nodded silently. If the town died the way the two men had, it must have been a sorry sight indeed.

"Do you know anything about it, Mr. McGuire?"

"Call me Mike and I'll call you Liz. All I know is that yesterday I got a call on the horn, the radio, to shut off Highway 6. Other units were heading north to detour southbound traffic off 8A. There was an accident at the Tonopah Test Range making about fifty square miles, including Cottonwood, a restricted area."

"What sort of accident?"

"I don't know too much about it. When 6,000 sheep died at the Dugway Proving Grounds, security was tighter than a closed coffin. The Army likes it that way and the civilians in the Atomic Energy Commission follow suit. As near as I can make out, one of their bombs got away from them and began leaking radiation from an underground fault."

"Then this has happened before?"

"It could be, we've closed the road before. But troopers usually comply and leave the questions to the big brass."

"What do we do now?" she asked.

"Liz, that is an A-1 question. I suggest you get some rest. We can't out through the front. I'd like to wait for daylight before I do any exploring."

"Day, night," she sighed, "it's all the same in a mine."

"Maybe. But I'm betting on an air tube or an escape shaft. We'd have a better time searching when the light comes through."

"If it does."

"It will. I know the salt floor isn't too comfortable, but it's a damned sight better than a web. No need to take watches," McGuire said.

"Nothing can get in here now, human or otherwise."

THE SUN'S RAYS, streaming through the silken bars of their prison, awakened the pair of fugitives. McGuire snapped into consciousness and glanced around.

His day's experience had cautioned him against any sudden movement.

"Wake up, Liz," he whispered.

"I'm awake. Who could sleep under the circumstances?"

"I did, a little bit. Now let's see if we can get out of here."

She followed McGuire as he stepped cautiously into the mine's interior. He shuffled ahead slowly, feet searching for any blind drop that would plummet him to the bottom on a vertical shaft.

"See anything?"

"Yes. Up ahead. It's some sort of opening. Come on."

The cavern grew lighter as they approached the fissure. By sliding edgewise, they could squeeze through. She followed him to the sand near the mountainside.

"It looks clear," she said.

"And where do you plan on going?"

"We can't stay here forever, Mike."

"You're right. Hold it a minute. No, better come back inside. I'm not going out there unarmed."

"Do you have a gun?"

"No, I lost it on my way over here. Besides, you'd have to be a marksman to plant a slug in that

thing's eye. And its eye is at least forty feet off the ground."

He walked away from the fissure and rummaged around the interior of the cave. McGuire pulled an iron staff from a pile of tools. Three-fourths up the length of the 12-foot rod he tied on a fire ax. He hefted the weapon. It was sharp enough for a spear and, if he could slice the spiders legs with it, the contest might be equalized.

"Can I help?"

"Yeah, sure. This isn't much, but it's better than nothing. You know, Liz, I remember reading that our ancestors killed savage beasts with less than what we have here."

"What do you want me to do?"

"Do we have an oxy-acetylene torch around here?"

She looked around briefly then shook her head.

"No loss, the thing would have been too unwieldy anyway. I never did like flame-throwers. We're set. Let's go."

He hitched a coil of rope over his left shoulder, grabbed his weapon in his right hand and led the girl back to the crack in the mine's wall.

"Where do we head?"

"When in doubt, go west."

THEY WERE six feet from the mine wall when McGuire froze. A shadow was moving across the ridge above them. He whirled and pushed her toward the slit in the rocks.

"Run for the mine."

"But . . ."

"Run, damn it, run!"

She stumbled toward the safety of the cavern and McGuire turned. He glanced up and shuddered. There was no way out.

Poised twenty feet above him, a victim grasped firmly in its pincers, stood McGuire's enemy. Sensing a new meal, the shiny black jaws opened and the dried remains dropped at McGuire's feet. He glanced at the corpse and gagged. Vacant eyes stared sightlessly from a shrunken face. The skin was wrinkled and parched as if mummified. The state trooper grimaced, forcing the bile back down his throat. The body was that of a child.

He back-pedaled across the sand, fighting to keep his balance. The giant tarantula jumped from the rocks and landed gracefully. It regarded its prey with caution.

(Continued on page 54)



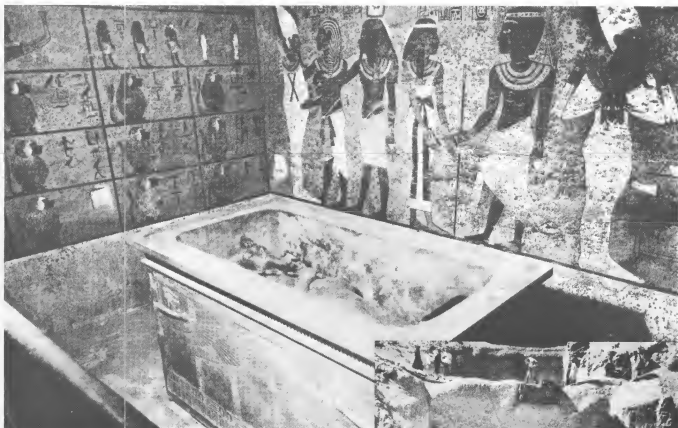
TERROR

FROM THE MUMMY'S EYES



by CHARLES THOMPSON (Editor's Note: The following story was smuggled out of the archives of the World Archeological Society. Upon receiving the aged, typed manuscript, we assigned Charles Thompson to discover the truth behind the story. Shortly after inquiring about the manuscript (the Society denied its existence), our offices were ransacked and the manuscript was stolen. Luckily, our writer had made a copy of the material and he pieced together a story of pure horror.)

“WORLD’S MOST TERRIBLE coffee, don’t you agree?” Haskins said. He pushed his pith helmet to the back of his head and scratched the sand under his inflamed eyes. “Blasted sand gets into everything.”



This interior shot of the tomb was taken by Haskins just before he was mysteriously slain.



The High Priest Mentemhet was a prophet in the Theban cult; was buried secretly.

Mere human death was not strong enough to destroy his evil genius—neither could three thousand years hope to erase the dread, cruel command of Mentemhet!

"And there's not one bloody thing, not one artifact, to show for our efforts here."

"Hey now, young man," Haskins said. "Let's not hear any defeatist talk. After all, we've not been here that long."

Dave Logan spooned a dead fly out of his coffee. He glanced around the small circle of tables set in the cool shade of the mud cafe. His eyes swept over Haskins' daughter, and Dave smiled. If she could stand the grit and grime and everything tasting of sand, then he could.

"Father is right, David. We've really only just started our search . . ."

"For what? Something that might not exist? I know," he said, waving his hand over her protest. "The scrolls do say that

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Mentemhet was buried in the Valley of the Kings. But look," he continued, "over 60 Egyptian Pharaohs were buried here. The Society has accounted for almost all of these. Besides, most authorities feel that Mentemhet was a legend. I don't see why his tomb is so important."

"People have been searching for Mentemhet for centuries. He was the most powerful man during King Tut-Ankh-Amen's reign. And his grave holds the secret, the key if you will, to many undecipherable scrolls. We must find his final resting place."

"I'll go along with you, Professor. But let me tell you that this sand feels like a second skin."

Professor Haskins ordered another round of coffee and the three archeologists stared at the dusty streets of Luxor, Egypt. Even now, some twenty years after its invention, the car was an unheard-of luxury. Egyptian towns in 1922 were interested only in the rudiments of survival.

"Pardon me, if you please," a reedy voice intoned.

The three turned as one to stare into the somber eyes of a wrinkled, sun-ravaged face. The old Egyptian was clad only in a dusty cape and fraying sandals. But his eyes glowed like fiery coals.

"Yes? What is it?"

"Are you the American, Mr. Haskins?"

"That's right. And who might you be?"

"Ah, sir, that is of no importance." The old man smiled, revealing a set of chipped, yellowed teeth. "But I have heard of your interest in the legend of Mentemhet. I have some information which you might find worth your while."

"How much?" Dave asked disgustedly.

"Oh no, sir, not money, if you please. I am a poor man, true, but proud. No, I seek not after riches. I would only like to help you."

"And probably call down your hordes to massacre us when we find the treasure. No, thank you."

"Wait." Jennifer laid her hand on Dave's forearm. "Hear the man out."

"Not far from here," the old man continued, "lies the ruins of a small temple dedicated to Osiris. It is from there, three kilometers, to the resting place of the man you seek, Mentemhet. If you release a sand asp after touching its head to the head of Osiris, he will crawl off in the direction of the tomb you seek. I



Dr. M. Zacharia Ghoneim examines a well-preserved mummy from the house of Mentemhet—luckily this fellow carried no curse at all.

ask nothing. The information is yours to do with as you wish."

The old man bowed, stepped through the beaded curtain and walked rapidly from the cave.

"I don't like it, Professor. It smells. In fact, it stinks. If that man knew of such a method, then why didn't he locate the riches himself? We'll wind up doing the digging and our reward will be a dirk between the ribs."

"But he doesn't look like a bandit chieftain," Jennifer said.

"I agree," the professor said, throwing a handful of copper coins onto the battered table. "We can reload the supply wagon and be off to the altar before noon." He paused and looked into Dave's sweat-streaked face. "Are you coming?"

"Only to make sure Jennifer isn't carried away by some desert shiek, and just to keep you out of trouble, Professor."

THERE SITS the temple," Dave shouted. He turned the creaking truck to a small stone hill surrounded by sand dunes. "Have you got the snake?"

"Right here," Haskins said, rattling the wire-mesh cage. "Nasty looking fellow, this one is."

"Well, that's not the only thing bad about him. Just one of his fangs produces enough venom to wipe out an army. Careful when you hand it to me," Dave said. "Now let's see if this fellow is worth anything."

The trio trudged over to the small temple as Haskins waved his arm at the line of camels following their tracks. The animals knelt in the sand and their riders dismounted.

Dave gingerly grasped the sand asp behind its triangular head and walked through the rubble to the cracked idol Osiris. The snake wiggled and curled its tail around Dave's forearm. It stiffened as he reached the idol, apparently trying to avoid any contact. When he had pressed its scaly head against the stone figure, the snake stiffened.

He retraced his steps, paused in front of the truck and dropped the snake to the sand. The asp crawled through their tire tracks, then angled left, shuddered and died.

"To the left, then," Haskins chortled.

"Right," Dave echoed. "Let's mount the boys up and mark off those three kilometers."

"Father, look."

The men followed Jennifer's outstretched arm. The camels had turned and were retracing their steps back to the village.

"What the devil . . ." Haskins sputtered. He ran through the shifting sand to where their supplies, and three men, lay in various stages of disarray. One of the men struggled to his feet and rubbed his bruised forehead.

"Many apologies, master. But the men . . ." He gestured to the line of retreating animals, "the men fear the wrath of Osiris. They say he killed the snake for showing you and that you will also die if you try to uncover the tomb of Mentemhet."

"There is no curse connected with Mentemhet. We do not know if he even existed . . ."

"But the men say . . ."

"I don't care what the men say. All right, Hemren. Gather up your friends and load the supplies in the truck. Now don't tell me you're afraid also."

"Oh, no, master. I do not believe in this business. We shall do as you say."

The three Egyptians loaded the crates into the back of the Rover and Dave started the engine.

"The man said three kilometers. 'That's a little over one and a half miles.'"

The truck lurched over the sand dunes and the archeologists found themselves in a box canyon, surrounded by high, jagged rock walls. Dave glanced around and brought the vehicle to a halt.

"This is as far as we go."

"I don't recall seeing this on our map," Haskins mused. "But then this relatively virgin territory. Let's have a look see, shall we."

They piled out of the truck and glanced around. One of the Egyptians knelt and let out a hoarse cry. The rock floor had shifted, revealing a long shaft which disappeared into inky blackness. The Egyptian rose to his feet, terror flashing from his eyes.

"That looks like the entrance. Who's game for a little exploring?"

"Not just yet, Dave. Let's camp first and then we can make plans."

"What happened to all your enthusiasm, Professor? This is what we came for."

"I just don't like the way we were led here, Dave. Let's unload first. There's enough light for our search after we get organized."

THE ARCHEOLOGISTS and the Egyptians descended into the Stygian darkness of the passageway. The walls were festooned with ancient murals half-covered with dust and sand. Jennifer buttoned up her blouse and

walked closer to Dave. She tensed as a blood-curdling scream broke their hushed passage. They raced back to the entrance and saw one of their helpers skewered on a spear extending from the wall.

"Good Lord!" Haskins whispered. He watched helplessly as the man danced painfully on the bloody shaft. The man jerked convulsively and lay still. As if sensing the death of its prey, the spear slipped back into the wall and the corpse fell in a tangled, dripping heap.

"Can't we do something?" Jennifer whispered.

"The man's dead," Dave said sternly, rising to his feet. "The spear got him just under the heart." He wiped his hands on the rock wall. "It was fairly quick."

"But not quick enough, poor devil," Haskins said. He was interrupted as a slab of rock slammed shut, barring their exit. Jennifer screamed.

"Lights!" Dave yelled. Three flashlight beams broke the darkness.

"Now what?" Haskins asked. "We can't get out. The damned rock."

"Let's look up ahead. Maybe there's another way out. Come here, Hemren."

The Egyptian guide walked slowly, fearfully, into the center of the tunnel.

"Tell your men we must stay together at all costs. Tell them that if we get separated, it may cost them their lives. Go on, translate."

While Hemren babbled rapidly, Dave ran his hand over the tunnel wall. His hand hit an outcropping and the floor shook as the rock formation began to shift. The group found themselves facing Mentemhet's burial chamber.

"Who's first?"

"Hold it, Dave. This looks too easy. I don't like it."

One of Hemren's men, eyes bulging at the sight of piles of precious stones, walked through the entrance to the cavern. He peered around the corners of the entrance then, satisfied that no terrors lay in wait, proceeded to the lone, stone sarcophagus in the corner of the tomb. He turned to beckon the others forward when a loud, moaning sigh echoed through the underground passage.

"Don't go in there, anyone," Haskins whispered. "Hemren, translate."

The sighing became a shriek, and it seemed that all the tortured souls

(Continued on page 46)

TELL US ABOUT IT

(Below is printed an unedited letter from one of our readers. As you well know, it is our habit to pick an especially fascinating letter and highlight it in its own column. Then, if it looks extremely promising, we send a photographer to the scene to try to get a shot of what's going on. And so it was with Mr. Crawford's letter. Dan Robbins, the staff photographer who was assigned to cover the story, brought back a chilling tale of horror. Imagine his shock and stark terror when what Mr. Crawford had described, actually happened to Dan. This is a real ghoulish tale for you. And all the more terrifying because it actually happened! The Editor)

Dear Sir:

I don't mean to be rude or anything, but I think your magazine is full of baloney. Ghosts, vampires and werewolves—they're all just stories. I admit that in spite of myself, I got rather involved in the tales, but I could separate reality from make-believe. Not like some people I know.

But this isn't taking me any closer to what I want to tell you. I'm not even sure I can put it into words that will make any sort of sense, but here goes.

I am a music student at a small college located in the northwest of our nation. It is a tiny school—something like 250 students—and very much cut off from the rest of the world. Since it is such a small place, it doesn't have much of a music department. In fact, I have to go into town to practice on the local church's organ because our school doesn't have one.

Let me also say that I don't take drugs, don't drink and never in my life have seen strange visions

or hallucinations or whatever you want to call them. I'm a very sober, down-to-earth sort of person with no hangups (that I know of) and of course with absolutely no interest whatsoever in the supernatural.

So there I was at about six o'clock in the evening. I had just finished practicing four hours. The piece I was playing was the fugue on the name of BACH by Litz, a very beautiful but extremely difficult thing for the organ. And I was having trouble with it—I couldn't follow the time meter for the life of me. I was pretty disgusted as I walked down the stairs and up the aisle. Just as I was about to put the key in the lock, I thought I heard something.

I turned quickly around, but nothing unusual was in sight. I leaned over to insert the key—and I heard it again. This time I waited without moving at all.

And then I really heard it—it was the organ! Very softly, much too soft for it to be played at all. And yet I was listening to it. Litz's Fugue—only played correctly! The subject, statement, countersubject—it was perfect, but so soft I could scarcely hear it.

I got out of that church fast, believe me. And almost ran all the way back to campus. But I didn't tell anyone about it because I got to thinking. I'd been practicing for a long time and was dead tired. I was positive I had just imagined the whole thing. And this was further strengthened when the next day a friend of mine and I went to the church again and tried to make the organ play as softly as I thought I had heard it. We couldn't do it.

About a week later, I was again

up in the loft. This time I was playing an adagio for organ by Albinoni, another difficult piece. And I was doing a pretty good job of it, if I do say so myself.

It came time to leave and at the door I again thought I heard the organ playing Albinoni—only far better than I could have ever hoped to play it. I admit I was scared, but I forced myself to stick around and listen. It was so quiet that whole passages didn't reach my ears. This is what made me begin to think that perhaps I wasn't imagining it. All of us, if we try hard enough, can "hear" music in our minds—but not snatches of it.

Then I began hearing another piece—something I wasn't familiar with. It was incredible, beautiful, moving.

I ran back to campus, scared stiff. I still couldn't bring myself to tell anyone (except that one friend of mine and he promised to keep it quiet).

I went to the minister of that church the following day. Instead of laughing to me, he was very serious.

About fifty years ago, the church had a musical genius for its organist—one of those who never had a lesson in their lives, it just came naturally. Anyway, this fellow was in love with a girl, who was also beloved by another man.

One night this rival sneaked up to the loft and stabbed the organist, who was killed instantly. The murderer was tried and found guilty and sentenced to death.

The minister said that he too had heard the ghostly music, but when I played both pieces I had heard, he said they weren't the same ones. In other words, it seemed as if the ghost were trying to help me!

So back we went and with the minister's help, I tried to contact the ghost. No luck. Then I played something and made a lot of mistakes on purpose—and stood by the doorway. The organ remained silent.

Nearly a month went by before I heard it again. And I figured out what to do: I had to be alone in the church and really stumped on a musical problem before the organ would start—and only during

the twilight hours.

I know this must sound crazy—but what am I going to do? I'm petrified each time the organ plays, but I have to use it, and only during those hours. (Now I realize how easy it was for me to be put on the schedule.) And I know

whatever is causing the organ to play is doing it because it loves music so much. Let's say it is a ghost. Have I the right to drive it out? After all, it was there long before I was. And I would hate to deprive it of its love of music.

Do you think people can get

used to the supernatural? The more I write this, the more I realize that maybe I'm not such a doubter after all.

Maybe your magazine is true.

Sincerely,

A. D. Crawford

THE END



Immediately after this pic was snapped by photographer Dan Robbins, the organ began to peal a Bach chorale. The sound was extremely soft, but it was audible—further proof of unseen hands at work.

NOTES FROM OUR READERS

Dear Sir:

You can tell Mr. Harry Haller that his wife will have to suffer until the next full moon. Although his precious Betty did apologize after running her shopping cart over my foot, I made sure she suffered for her carelessness.

I'm sick and tired of people moving about in such haste without any consideration for older people. We're human, too. Next time she's in a supermarket, I'm sure she'll think twice about trying to rush up and down the aisles as if the very Devil were on her trail.

So Mrs. Haller will have to suffer and limp for at least three weeks. All the special doctors in the world will do her no good. I'll be watching her very carefully when this curse wears off and if she gives me any more trouble, she'll have twice the pain and four times the agony. Glinka Schmarmeedle

Dear Sir:

I need help and your magazine is the only place I can turn to. Nobody else can do anything, it seems. I'm even afraid to go outside.

Three weeks ago, I noticed that something was following me. Whenever I turned around, this thing would be there. It is black and shapeless. It looks like a thick cloud and it always stays twenty-five feet from me. No one else can see it, but I know it's there because it keeps calling my name.

If anyone can help me, please write about removing specters. I'm frightened because I don't know what it will do next. Kenny Kimmel

(Editor's Note:

If any of our readers have information on how to avoid specters, send the information to Mr. Kenny Kimmel in care of this magazine.)

Dear Sir:

I read your last magazine and, frankly, I think your stories are a lot of bunk. Anyone who really believes in this stuff should have his head examined. And all your stories are so general when they're not downright disgusting.

Who writes your sickie stories, anyway? Billy Finnegan

Dear Sir:

I read George Venner's witch story in your June issue and I thought he was putting me on until I had a similar experience.

I was hitch-hiking across the country when I met this chick in Kansas City. While she was giving me a lift, she mentioned that she would be attending a Black Mass that night. She told me she didn't usually extend an invitation to strangers, but she liked me and would make an exception.

She met me later that night on a street corner near a cement mill and I had to wear a cloth over my eyes while she drove us to an old building.

In the loft there were about twenty people. The room was lit only by ghostly red fires and the incense was so strong you could almost taste it.

Well, things started to get pretty hot there and I got plenty scared. I ran past the guard at the door, raced down the steps and out into the street. Thankfully, I was near a

residential area not far from a main thoroughfare.

I caught a cab, stopped off at my motel and checked out of Kansas fast. When I got to Colorado, I noticed there was a note at the bottom of my duffel bag. It read:

You can't get away from us, Martin. We have something of yours. When we want your soul, we shall summon you to us and you will come.

The note was written in blood. And I've been looking over my shoulder ever since. Martin Gorden

Dear Sir:

I recently moved into an old house in Pennsylvania. It is a reconverted mansion. Things were quiet for about a month but then my husband and I began to notice strange noises.

The sounds increased in intensity for one week, reaching an ear-splitting level. County officials and historians heard these sounds. Sleep was impossible, of course, and my husband and I made plans to move out.

Then the noises stopped!

We thought that perhaps the house had settled so we unpacked our belongings and continued our day to day routine.

The noises began again and this time we saw luminous figures racing through the upper corridors.

We are at our wits' end right now and we thought Gabriel Varney could help us out with this. Could you forward our letter to him and say that he's welcome anytime he comes to call?

Mrs. Lyle Higgins
(Consider it done. The Assistant Ed.)

The editors of *Horror Stories* are happy to print your comments and any replies that you, our readers, wish to send in to us. Address all mail to:

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ADVENTURES IN

WITCHCRAFT

by WHITTIER FOWLES, Ph.D., Sc.D.



ASILENT, hovering specter can fill us with awe and terror of the Unknown; a spirit at a seance will give us vital information about the world beyond the grave; a poltergeist will break all our dishes against the wall. Obviously something is out of place! The impish, playful poltergeist just doesn't seem to belong with his more serious brothers. But the truth of the matter is this childish apparition is more spiteful, more dangerous, more destructive than either the spirit or the ghost. He has also been with us for a much longer period of time—and yet hardly anything is known about this particular psychic phenomenon.

Poltergeist is the name given to any supposed supernatural cause that involves the outbreak of rappings, inexplicable noises, and similar disturbances. The actual word comes from the German *polter* and *geist* (literally, a "rattling ghost") and at the same time sums up the character of this apparition—childish, capable of performing purposeless tricks,

openly mischievous, having a destructive tendency and a mean disposition to boot. He's an old pain in the neck, hanging around since time first began. And this fellow is unique in that he exhibits the very same characteristics in savage and civilized societies alike. The earliest written record of his activities dates from 856 B.C., but you can be sure that he plagued even the cavemen with his obnoxious pranks.

Poltergeist disturbances are always particularly active in the neighborhood of one person, generally a child or young woman, and preferably an epileptic or hysterical person. According to many spiritualists, this chosen subject is a natural medium through whom the spirits desire to communicate to the world of the living. In earlier times, these unfortunates were believed to be witches or at least victims of black magic. It is for this reason that poltergeist are represented as a development from witchcraft and the direct forerunner of modern spiritualism, and in fact, a kind of "missing link" between the two.

Literally, there have been thousands of cases involving poltergeists, but certainly one of the most famous (and the most mysterious) is that of the Joller family in Switzerland. Mr. Joller was a prominent lawyer of excellent character. In 1860-62, serious psychic disturbances broke out in Stans, his ancestral home. Loud knocks were first

heard by a servant, who also claimed she was haunted by a strange gray shape and the sounds of sobbing. She was dismissed in 1861 and another girl was hired. For a time there was peace in the house—until the summer of 1862 when the noises began again. Mrs. Joller and the seven children saw and heard many terrifying sights and sounds, but Joller alone remained a skeptic. Eventually, however, even he was convinced that no trick or over-active imagination was at work the night all of his children were violently shaken out of their beds. The manifestations became more and more outrageous and continued in full view of the thousands of curious people who flocked to see the spectacle. The police were called in. Under the Superintendent's orders, everyone was ordered out of the house. For six days it was under close observation and nothing extraordinary was experienced. But when the Joller family returned, the disturbances became so vicious that they were forced to leave Stans.

Here, as in most instances, there are children closely tied in with the manifestations, and for this reason, many authorities believe these visitations are the work of "naughty little girls" at play. There is much to be said for this theory. If a medium under a trance at a spiritualistic seance is frequently capable of producing great literary, musical and artistic compositions, why does the poltergeist bother with childish pranks? The answer in many cases is that the "spirits" are indeed perfectly human children.

But this perfectly valid argument does not hold true in the Joller case. Children could never have produced the manifestations that were seen in full view by hundreds of spectators. And they

(Continued on page 38)



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had no knowledge of previous instances which produced the very same phenomenon of poltergeists in every time and place. Above all, the evidence of many onlookers was that the most violent disturbances were seen when the whole family were assembled outside the house and couldn't have made the opening of all windows, doors, cupboards and drawers, the materialization of that "thin gray cloud," the noises and the apparitions that made headlines the whole world over.

More than a hundred years after the Jollers' experiences at Stans, we are as much in the dark as ever. Noisy rappings, furniture flying through space, heavy plates smashing against a wall—these still cannot be explained. Playful children or destructive ghosts from another level of existence—you be the judge.

And again I plead with you—if any of my readers know of an experience or an instance where poltergeists are at work, I beg him to write, me in care of this magazine. There is so much to learn and we know so very little—of a world beyond our senses.

THE END

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THE HOWLING DEMON (Continued from page 25)

they began expanding the opposite direction, away from the mountains."

"You know, I was wondering why there was so much uncleared land in those parts—it's not been touched in 250 years."

"Exactly, Jim. Through the years, people gradually forgot about the incident, but more out of habit than anything else I guess they avoided the wilds and left the land for the deer and squirrels."

"And now I come along as a complete outsider to stir up old grief," Jim mused.

Maud smiled at him. "Not at all. It's over and done with. I'm not proud of what our ancestors did, but I can live with it as long as it never happens again. We mustn't allow ourselves to be bogged down with guilt from the past. We've done more than our share of cruelty during our own times. But enough of this. You young folks be off. Enjoy yourselves on this lovely summer night and leave an old woman alone with her memories."

I'VE BEEN SO busy I almost forgot to tell you, Jim—but last night we nearly had us an accident."

"An accident? What happened?" Jim looked up from his plans to see his foreman's honest face.

"I guess one of the men had been careless and tossed a cigarette butt into the cellar. That oil-soaked rag we used yesterday to wipe down those shovels caught on fire."

"Any damage?"

"Only to those voucher slips. They ignited almost immediately—but I threw a few pails of water on the blaze. You didn't need them, did you?"

"No, of course not, but we've got to be more careful—suppose it had been the dynamite that had caught on fire? I know it's stored in fireproof containers, but that still doesn't make me any less nervous."

"I'll give a pep talk to the men this afternoon. By the way, we're having a hell of a time on removing those stumps."

"I don't see why."

"Neither do I. The ones down by lot 39 came out like pulling carrots. These guys are rooted like teeth or something—almost like they didn't want to leave the ground, like they were protecting something. Weird, isn't it?"

"Perhaps not. The soil may have less rocks in it and give the roots more of a stronghold. But speaking of rocks, did you notice that a few of them had fallen down in the cellar?"

"As a matter of fact, yes. Maybe the water I poured in to stop that fire had something to do with it."

"I don't know. The rocks looked like they had been shoved out. There's a slight indentation in the wall about two feet deep that I never noticed before—as if something had pushed its way out."

"Probably a mole or something. The whole countryside's riddled with their tunnels and . . ."

"Jim! Jim, for God's sake, hurry!"

"Sue—what are you doing here? Honey, what's the matter? You're as pale as a ghost. Calm down and tell me!"

"Oh, Jim, I got here as fast as I could," she gasped and collapsing into his arms, began to sob.

"What is it, baby?"

"The town—it's found out about that cellar. That stupid bitch Sarah Grubber—she's told everyone that you've come to call back the dead and make them curse the town."

"What the—but I thought your aunt was the only one who knew its history. And this doesn't make any sense. Why should I want to call up the Devil?"

"Jim, I don't know. But Sarah also knew about the cellar's existence and the warlock's death. She's organized the rabble to come here tonight and destroy the camp, the machinery—anything to stop operations and drive you away. I found out by accident—overheard two of the vigilante group talking. I didn't know people could be so stupid."

"I didn't either—but that's not important now. Men," he called out to the crew of workers who had gathered around him, "we may be in for some trouble. Sue has just told us that the townspeople have organized—"

"Not the whole town," Sue interrupted. "The lazy ones; the ignorant who want to believe in stupidity!"

"All right then—some of the local people want to see this camp destroyed. Our cellar," he pointed to the pit, "is all that is left of a house that stood on this property well over two hundred years ago. Its inhabitant was believed to be a warlock, a male witch. He was trapped inside and vigilantes burned the house to the ground. The people tried to forget it ever

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happened—what was left of their conscience was bothering them. And now a foolish old woman has led descendants of these very same people to believe our actions are going to bring back this sorcerer—we've disturbed his rest."

"So what are they planning to do?" a man asked.

Sue spoke up. "Late tonight they're going to come and burn out your camp. They'll put the blame on roving teen-agers. That way they hope to discourage you, to force you all to leave."

"I hardly think that will make us quit. I've worked too hard at building up this construction company to let a few set-backs make me want to give up."

"But they have other ways too. Any supplies you may need, you won't be able to buy in town—the hardware store will be conveniently 'out of it at the moment, sir.' The same goes for food, lodging—anything you need."

"But you said only a few people were behind it."

"Right—but Sarah Grubber owns half this town and keeps tabs on the other half. Her word is law. She can foreclose mortgages, drive people out of business, ruin anyone who tries to go against her will!"

"Something's going on around here—and it has nothing to do with the super-natural," Jim muttered. Louder, he said: "I'm going into town, men. We've got three hours until sundown. Anybody who doesn't want to stick around is free to leave—I won't penalize him. There's no reason why you should want to stick your necks out."

"We're all behind you, Jim," Bob said, the workers echoing his sentiment. "We have a stake in this operation, too."

"Good. Thanks a lot. I'll be back in an hour. Come on, Sue."

"But I want to stay here, Jim. With you and the men. Don't forget that we're engaged. I have something at stake just like the others."

"And that's just why I don't want you around here if trouble breaks out. You've already done more than enough in warning us."

They got into Jim's beat-up truck and headed down the road. Sue looked back to see Bob organizing the men into teams.

"Oh God, don't let there be bloodshed," she softly prayed. "Jim, I still don't understand any of what's going on."

"I don't either, honey. But I think I know why dear Miss Grubber is doing all this."

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Ten minutes later they pulled up in front of the county courthouse.

"Wait here—I'll be back as soon as possible." He climbed out of the truck and raced up the stairs two at a time. Sue took the precaution of closing the windows and locking both doors. It was a wise move. Several idlers lounging in the park interrupted their earnest talk just long enough to glare at her. Some even made threatening gestures. A crash against the back window made Sue cry out. It was caused by an empty beer bottle thrown by an unseen hand. She was frightened, then angry.

"Those cowards—can't even stand up to an old woman. What kind of town is this turning into?"

"She looked up with relief to see Jim leaning over to unlock the driver's door, she asked, 'Did you find whatever you were looking for?'"

"You bet. According to the deeds on file in the courthouse, Sarah Grubber owns lots 42, 45 and 46."

"And you're working on lots 43 and 44!"

"Exactly. She wants to scare us off so she can buy the land at—pardon the pun—dirt prices when building space becomes really valuable."

"That greedy old hag. But the bank owns the land."

"Sure it does, but that's not to say she can't easily convince them their land is worthless and buy it for a song, maybe even tell them that it will hurt the town to have property built on it."

"And her flunkies will back her up. Jim, how can we stop her?"

"By having a face-to-face confrontation. They still don't know that we're wise to their little scheme. But first, I've got to take you home."

"Oh Jim, no! I want to stay and help you."

"Home, young lady. And I want you to stay with Aunt Maud tonight—just for safety's sake."

"I wish Daddy were alive. He'd show those cowards what's up. Mom too."

"I know, honey. But you're also a brave girl and I'm prouder now than ever to know you—love you, too." He started the engine. "Don't worry. I don't think there'll be any real trouble tonight."

"Just the same, I won't sleep a wink until I know for sure you're safe. I just wish I could understand what's going on."

"So do I, dearest, so do I."

NIGHT FELL, but there was no

relief from the scorching heat. The stars drifted hazily in the clear sky; a moon shone fitfully upon the tense faces of the men clustered about in small groups. No breeze dispelled the heavy humidity from the air.

Jim sat on a packing crate, several yards from the others. He reached in his pocket and pulled out a handkerchief to wipe the sweat off his brow and the back of his neck.

"Why don't they do something?" Bob complained. "I know they're out there—can't see them of course, but I can feel them just the same."

"Stop sounding like a 1931 jungle movie, Bob. And lower your voices. Noise carries farther at night and we don't want anybody to know we're around. Are the men prepared?"

"As much as they can be without guns."

"I don't want to see anyone killed."

"Sure, but this little friend of mine can sure do some damage," Bob whispered, patting a heavy barrel stove lying beside him. "Hey—what was that?"

"I'm not sure, but it might have been a twig cracking. Get the men together."

They hid in the shadows cast by tractors, trailers, trucks. They waited.

First one figure appeared, then another and another until a band of thirty ghostly apparitions silently stalked into the camp. A match was struck, briefly lighting up the coarse features of a man, one of them who had been in the park earlier. He whispered hoarsely, "Bring the gasoline."

Another man appeared from the darkness, lugging a heavy container. Stooping down, he began to loosen the cap.

From out of the cellar Jim shouted: "OK, men—let's get them!"

Spotlights were suddenly lit, for an instant freezing the invaders in the glare—but only for an instant. They had half-expected a fight, but they were ready.

Workers and vigilantes scuffled, rolling and kicking in the dirt, punching, grunting, cursing at each other.

In the midst of the battle, Jim glanced up to see an old woman standing alone on the grassy knoll that separated the site from the woods. "There she is!" he cried. "She's the only one responsible for this." He flung himself toward her. "I know who you are, you old witch. You want this land for yourself. I'll expose you to the police. I'll . . ."

"Silence!" Her strong voice commanded, its power resounding off the cliffs until it was gradually lost within the circling echoes of the mountains.

The men stopped their brawling in wonder as the old woman marched towards them. She was tall and her stately carriage heightened the proud, cold sneer that was her ordinary expression.

She focused hawk eyes on Jim. "You are the one who shall be exposed. We don't want you here, meddling, ripping up our beautiful forests and flowers with your loud, ugly machines." And malice dripping venom from her lips, "You won't even allow the dead to rest in peace."

"You knew we were rezoneing this area," Jim countered. "Why didn't you stop us then?"

"I wasn't aware that you were working so near the . . ."

"The spot where your illustrious ancestors burned alive a poor, defenseless man," Jim cut in.

"Enough of this! That creature was a warlock, a danger to our town and to our souls. He had to be exterminated. He . . ." She didn't finish the sentence. Sarah's eyes grew big. Gasping, she pointed, her mouth no longer capable of producing speech.

Everyone followed her glance. From the opposite end of the camp came another figure, not vigilante, not worker. A young man with a strange, unworldly look on his face, a man dressed as anyone would have in 1694.

The two warring parties, now united in sheer terror, drew back at his approach. Only Sarah stood her ground, a look of inexpressible fury contorting her features. She hunched her shoulders and raised her arms.

The man snarled and performed the same action. The two stood looking at each other, undisguised hatred boiling in their faces.

"Back, back, I command you into everlasting Hell!" A handful of salt was thrown. Suddenly everything exploded into a white flash of unbridled heat. Sulphur and fire filled the air.

Jim found himself lying on the ground. He looked around him! The foreman, his workers, the townspeople were all frozen into postures of alarm. Dazed, he glanced up to see Sue. He scrambled to his feet and raced to her.

"My God—what happened? Are we all crazy?"

But Sue was also frozen as stiff

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and as still as any marble statue.

"I'll explain everything," came a quiet voice just behind him.

Jim whirled around. "Aunt Maud! What has happened, woman?"

The old lady stepped out of the shadows. She looked tired, exhausted, yet triumphant. Softly she said, "It is finished."

"I don't understand." For the first time in twenty years, Jim felt on the verge of tears.

"Don't worry, dear. They're all safe. I put them under a trance so they would remember nothing of what has happened." Aunt Maud smiled at him. "Actually you're to blame for all this—but only indirectly of course. Remember when you had that small fire—Sue told me about it—your foreman poured water into the cellar. That water reactivated the spell. Under the threat of fire, the warlock was put into a trance so that he would survive. Only water, fire's opposite, so to speak; could be able to break it. Perhaps some of your dynamite explosions loosened chinks in the mortar to allow moisture to enter the creature's lair. This gave him life and power again."

"Sarah knew about him—she is one of them, you know. That was her real reason she wanted you gone. She was fiercely jealous of anyone else with the Power."

"But you must be a witch also!"

"Of course. That is why I enchanted all the others—even Sue knows nothing of my double life. But I am a white witch. I only do good."

"The warlock and Sarah—how did you destroy them?"

"I didn't. They have the same power as I, are just as strong. But while they were diverting their power by directing it against each other, I was able to sneak up and banish them never to return. If they had had the intelligence to turn on me, I would have been completely at their mercy. Sarah and I have been at a stalemate for years—the warlock upset the balance of power."

"I only have a few minutes before the spell wears off and the others awaken. They shall remember nothing of what occurred tonight. The townsmen will think they came here to inspect the work. Your men are going to show them the camp and explain its operations. All will be friends again."

"May I give you a lift back into town?"

Maud laughed. "No thanks. I'll fly back." She leaped into the air. "Bring Sue home early tonight—she has to go to work in the morning!" Maud called out a good-night and was lost among the trees.

Jim smiled. Lighting a cigarette, he sat down on a rock to wait for the others to revive.

THE END

THE MUMMY'S EYES (Continued from page 33)

in Hell were joining the chorus. Hemren's man stood transfixed in the center of the chamber. He glanced around wildly, turned and ran toward the circular entrance. When he was five feet from the relative safety of the access tunnel, the massive door swung shut and the shrieking ceased. Then one cry of terror broke the stillness. It echoed briefly and when it died, the door swung open once more.

"Lemsch, Lemsch," Hemren whispered.

The figure lay crumbled on the rock floor.

"I'm going in," Dave said, moving toward the opening. He shrugged off Haskins' restraining arm and raced to the body. He knelt briefly and then called to the others.

"He's dead."

"How?"

"I don't know, Professor. No marks on him. Just his eyes."

"What about them?"

"You'd better look see. I think it's safe now."

The five survivors gathered around the corpse as Dave turned him over. Only the whites of his eyes showed, as if, in death, the man had tried to avoid the terrible horror stalking him. His neck was contorted, tendons straining, as if he were trying to shout through speechless lips. Jennifer shuddered.

"Dave, look here. The sarcophagus. It's open!"

"Do you suppose it was Lemsch?"

"I don't think he had time, Dave. No, whatever used the spear, also opened the coffin."

"Father, that tomb was sealed over 2,500 years ago. Nothing could live that long."

"I don't know, Jennifer. Wait a minute. I remember that pyramids had booby traps, activated by the weight of someone walking or touching the insides of the tomb. I think we're faced with the same thing here."

"So what killed Lemsch?"

"I don't know," Haskins muttered hastily. "The opening of the coffin, maybe. What's the difference? The man is dead."

"By something that can kill us

all."

"We don't frighten that easily, Dave. Leave the superstitions to the natives and let's have a look see at the coffin."

Jennifer screamed and Dave whirled, drawing his pistol from his holster. He thumbed back the hammer and whispered, "Looks like the coffin is coming to see about us."

Rising slowly, awkwardly, was a figure of a man, swathed in centuries-old cloth. He walked slowly toward the center of the chamber and advanced on the five people. The two Egyptians rushed to the left wall and began to mumble incantations to Osiris and Isis. The mummy turned toward them.

"Don't shoot, Dave."

"The hell you say, Professor. Hemren and his boy don't stand a chance."

Dave emptied his revolver into the grey figure. It was unharmed. When it reached the trembling Hemren, it fastened two gnarled hands around the man's throat. Hemren gurgled in fright as the hands twisted. The snap of his neck echoed in the silence of the crypt.

"Good Lord!" Haskins said.

The gray figure of Mentemhet tossed Hemren's lifeless body aside then slew his companion. When it had finished its grisly task, it turned on the three survivors.

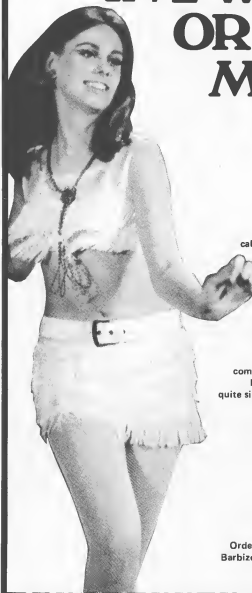
"Wait. We are friends," Haskins cried, retreating to the entrance. He glanced around desperately as the door crunched shut. Mentemhet lifted a babbling Haskins over his head and flung the body against the stone altar adjacent to his resting place. Dave saw that Haskins was dead. He pushed Jennifer behind him and pressed her against the wall.

Mentemhet pushed him aside, carried the screaming girl to the sacrificial altar, and plunged a ceremonial knife into her chest. She jerked up, then sagged limply, blood staining her blouse and running down her arm. As Mentemhet turned to Dave, the lone survivor heard a voice in his mind.

"You will leave the resting place of Mentemhet, most powerful of all. You will tell your brethren that this land is most sacred and shall not be defiled. This is your purpose now. Go and fulfill your sacred mission."

THEY FOUND Dave Logan
(Continued on page 58)

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RAISED FROM THE GRAVE

(Continued from page 16)

I followed Victor into the laboratory and saw him remove a hypodermic needle from the sterilizer.

"This is what you need to keep you alive, this serum. Look at your hands. It has been twenty-four hours since your last injection. See what is happening."

The skin on the back of my hands was beginning to crack and peel as if it had been over-exposed to the California sun. I watched in horror as large flakes of gray matter fell to the floor. Then I glimpsed the needle in Victor's hand.

"The shot," I screamed. "Give me the injection."

"You will do as I ask, then?" he said, grinning evilly.

"Yes, anything, just give me the injection. Please," I begged.

Two minutes after the serum entered my skin, the process of gradual destruction was reversed. I could live only as long as I suited Victor Young's ghoulish purpose. In order to retain life, I would have to specialize in death.

THE WOMAN WAS easy. Victor supplied me with a full-length photograph of my victim. On the back of the picture he listed her home address and her place of employment.

I picked up Joan Michaels' trail five hours before I was due for the injection. Following her home was no problem. She made one stop before entering her apartment building. I used the extra time to let myself into the living room.

"Who are you?" she asked, dropping the groceries on the foyer floor. "And what are you doing here?"

"Victor Young sent me."
"That man is despicable," she said, grimacing when his name was mentioned. "I suppose he had to send someone to do his bidding; he never was one for direct action."

"How did you get in here?"
"I picked the lock. Now do you want to hear the message?"

"Yes, if you must. Then I'd like you to leave."

"I must, unfortunately. Victor told me to tell you that your payment for spurning him is death, sentence to be carried out immediately."

She blanched, a look of indescribable horror contorting her face. Her hands rose to the single

strand of pearls adorning the black turtleneck sweater she wore. And then she screamed.

I was on her within seconds, pinning her to the rug. The knife in my hand flashed once, twice. She jerked under the impact of the blade. Her cries of terror subsided into a low gurgle. Joan Michaels had learned that Victor Young was not a man to be taken lightly.

"Hey! In there. Open up. This is the police."

I turned to the front door, now straining under the force of repeated blows. I glanced toward the fire escape in the bedroom, then back to the main entrance of the apartment. The door burst open and a blue uniform hurtled into the room. The young cop's eyes took in the still-warm corpse and the bloody knife clenched in my right fist.

"Drop the knife, buddy," he said, leveling the .38 revolver at my middle.

I advanced toward him.

I saw his trigger finger twitch and the revolver spat flame. The bullet caught me in the left lung. I stopped momentarily and glanced at my chest. Aside from a small nudge, there was no other sensation. The young policeman looked at me in amazement.

"I've got no quarrel with you, son. Just step aside and let me be."

"Good Lord!" he muttered.

The gun fired four more times in rapid succession, each slug doing no damage. I crossed the room, yanked his gun from his hand, and slammed the butt against his skull. He collapsed onto the rug.

"Just a headache is all you'll get," I said as I stepped over his body. A glance at my watch told me that I'd have enough time to get to Victor's laboratory for another shot. If I was delayed on the way it would be too late. He was waiting for me and the needle was delicately balanced between his right thumb and forefinger.

"Is she dead?"

"Yes. I need that shot."

"What proof have you?"

"A bloody knife and a police revolver. If that's not proof enough, turn your shortwave receiver to the police frequency and get the story yourself. Now give me the shot."

"Are you demanding now, young friend?"

"What's to stop me from killing you?"

"Think about it," he smiled. "Oh, you might cross the room and catch this before it's smashed. That would give you one day. What

would you do when the effects of the serum wore off?"

I glanced furtively around the room.

"Don't bother searching, Earl. You might find the raw materials but only I have the formula. It is in a safe place," he said, tapping his forehead. "Now come and take your medicine like a good fellow."

I watched the pale yellow liquid disappear into my skin. My lease on life had been extended for at least twenty-four hours.

MY NEXT VICTIM was a minor government official who had earned Victor's wrath by reducing subsidies for scientific endeavor.

"Look," I pleaded, "you can hide the girl's murder. Maybe. But don't tangle with the government."

"I want this man destroyed. His short-sightedness has forced me to use my already meager savings. I want him out of the way."

"You want an awful lot, Victor. How do you propose I go about it?"

"That's up to you but make sure there is no contact with me. If I go to prison, even for one night, you're as good as dead."

"What about me?"

"If they lock you up, Earl, there is no way I can give you the serum."

George Willard took country roads to and from his office at the State House. Victor told me the man had recently purchased a sports car and he delighted in turning the seldom-used routes into a personal Grand Prix. I met George Willard on a hair-pin turn five miles from his house. On his right, following the curve, was a sheer rock wall. On his left was a precipice lined with jagged, toothlike rocks.

He announced his presence by down-shifting before the turn. I calmly walked out from the rock wall and held up my hand, gesturing him to stop. White robes swirled around my body, giving me a ghostly appearance. I saw Willard's face contort in fear and anger.

He leaned on the horn and, when I held my ground, he flung the wheel to the right, trying to squeeze between me and the mountainside. His car wheels caught in a trough-like depression and the car rocketed over the left side of the road. I ran to the edge of the mountain bypass and watched the little car twist and wiggle as it plummeted downward. Halfway down the rock-strewn cliff, the gas tank exploded, flinging Willard's flaming body through the night. The grisly comet plunged



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through a tangle of sagebrush, starting several small fires. Satisfied that Williard was dead, I folded the robes under my arm and walked back to Victor's laboratory.

"Is he dead?"

"Yes. He went over the San Alameda Cliffs. There is no way anyone could have survived that crash."

"So we plan again."

"Fine."

"What is this? Suddenly you agree with me. That of course makes it easier."

"While you're thinking about how you want erased, I have a victim to take care of."

"Fine, go ahead and report back here tomorrow for your next shot."

"Is it prepared?"

"Do you think I'd be so foolish as to tell you?" he hissed. "Go about your business."

"But my business is here, with you," I said innocently.

"You fool!" he shouted. "You're mad. You're insane."

"You're the fool, Victor. You might have brought me back from the grave, but I didn't leave my soul under the earth."

"Stay away!" he yelled. "The serum. Only I have the formula."

"Good-bye Victor."

I walked slowly toward him, measuring each step as if I were walking the last mile. Victor retreated toward the instrument tray and grabbed a scalpel from the tangle of stainless steel.

"No good, Victor. You're as dead

as Joan Michaels and George Williard."

"And so are you, Earl. You have only a few hours left."

"I was dead once, Victor, and you brought me back. That was your mistake. You should always let the dead rest in peace."

He lunged at me, driving the surgical knife into my abdomen. He stabbed again and again, looking up in horror as my hands closed around his throat. His eyes bulged as he gasped for breath. My grip tightened and his body wiggled and jerked like a dying fish. He kicked once and his muscles relaxed. Victor Young was dead.

I kicked his body aside and began to ram my finger through the refrigerator. It contained a series of vials, but none held the pale yellow liquid. I checked the sterilizer. It was empty. Then I saw the syringe resting near his notebook. I took the injection just as the skin began to flake off my body.

Twenty-four hours isn't a long time, particularly when half of it is spent looking for a formula that might not exist. I found nothing. I searched every square inch of the laboratory and Victor's private rooms to no avail.

I gave up my search during the early evening. There were only a few hours remaining as I walked out of Victor's laboratory for the last time. I might have lived on as a ghoul, but I preferred to die as a man.

THE END

THE VAMPIRE'S CURSE (Continued from page 12)

They have a really nice house."

Marge turned to look at him, shuddering slightly when she glimpsed his face in the sickly-green light of the dashboard instruments. His eyes seem to have receded into his skull. His hair was flat, lifeless, and his hands, emaciated claws, gripped the steering wheel in a grip of . . . A grip of death?

She gazed at the desolate waste surrounding them, holding the dashboard as the car began to vibrate over the cracked asphalt.

"What's with the road?"

"Repairs," he shot back.

"Where are we now?" she asked, fighting to keep her voice steady.

"About ten miles from the city."

"Wendell, I thought you said five."

He glanced at her. "No, ten from the city and five from where we began our conversation. Nervous?"

"Should I be?"

"No. Enjoy the view. We're almost there."

Unhappy and fidgety, she glanced at her surroundings. They were riding along the edge of the ocean now, the waves just a few yards from the wheels of Wendell's sedan. She glanced behind her car and saw a white stretch of moon-drenched sand, devoid of any houses. The car hummed along the road, shaking occasionally when the wheels bounced over a rut.

"Here we are," he said, shifting the car into second and whirling the wheel to the left. He slowly abruptly as Marge turned from the ominous sea to the weatherbeaten stone house hugging a small cove.

He flipped over the ignition and went around the front of the car to open her door.

"Come."

"That sounds more like an order than an invitation."

"Come," he said again, reaching for her hand.

"Okay. Just let me get my purse

and . . ." Marge recoiled and began to tremble. His touch was colder, more frigid than anything she had yet experienced. This is a cold from the grave, her mind screamed. She looked into his eyes, floundering in the white-hot power which emanated from his sunken orbs. Numbly she grasped his hand and allowed him to lead her from the car to the mansion door.

WENDELL WAVED his arm at the oaken door and it swung open. An icy chill enveloped Marge and she shrank back briefly. Wendell turned and stared deep into her eyes. The cold evaporated and Marge followed her companion into the large hallway.

"Karl, it was good of you to come."

Marge turned at the sound of the sepulchral voice. A man and woman, both clad in somber black, stood to one side of the entrance. They smiled in unison, revealing long, tapered canine teeth which glistened in the candlelight. Marge turned to face Wendell and saw that his teeth extended over his lower lip, much more menacing than the plastic imitations he had worn during their shooting session. Fear shot through Marge's body when she realized the fangs were real.

"Ah Karl, you bring someone for dinner? How sweet, is it not Magda?"

"Ah, that I would have to see."

Horried, Marge knew that she would supply the dinner. The feast, she knew, would be her blood.

"Come, Karl, and bring your friend."

Marge hung back, retreating.

"Ah, but she is a difficult one, is she not?"

"Yes, Maximilian. But perhaps the extra effort will be worth it."

Karl turned to the girl and extended his arm abruptly. His eyes locked on hers and she proceeded with the stiff, jerky gait of a marionette. He led her to the cracked marble table which sat regally in the center of the unused dining room.

"Come, my dear. You will feel no pain, nothing but the slightest prick, nothing more than a pin breaking the skin. And in return for your gift to us, you shall have immortality and a power undreamed of by mortal man. Come."

Marge gazed slowly to the table under Karl's guiding hand. He leaned over her, fangs extended, eyes hopeful. Her eyes were glazed

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as Karl bent over her exposed neck and sank his fangs into the soft, warm flesh. She felt only a momentary sting soon replaced by an overpowering sense of calm. Her eyes closed to the sound of soft lapping and the shouts of glee from Maximilian and Magda.

When she came alive again, Karl was gesturing from the hallway. She rose from her marble altar and glanced at Magda, then Maximilian. They smiled encouragement as she made her journey down the dusty hallway to the building's front door. Karl wrapped her in a black cloak and ushered her out the door. When Marge turned to bid farewell to her new-found friends, she saw they had vanished.

"How much time do we have, dearest?"

"Time? The clock stands still for us, darling," Karl said.

"I feel power coursing through me, Karl. But the dawn . . ."

" . . . has no effect upon us. We may move about as mere mortals do." He reached over to grasp her hand in his. They rode through the gathering dawn entwined one with the other.

As they reached the door to her apartment, Karl paused before opening his door. When he appeared at her side of the car, his features had changed subtly. He was weak, meek, ineffectual Wendell.

She watched the green sedan slip into the stream of traffic and disappear on the coastal highway.

"WHERE THE HELL were you last night?" Cameron boomed.

She closed the studio door softly and walked over to kiss him softly, gently.

"I had a most wonderful dinner, darling," she said. "And how was yours?"

"Wonderful, I'll bet. I gave up calling about two in the morning. What time did you get back?"

"Does it make a difference?"

"It sure does," he snorted.

"Honey, nothing went on. But I did miss you, honest. If I remember correctly, your schedule is free until eleven this morning. We can forget about our 'not during business hours' rule."

He wrapped his arms around her and kissed her neck gently. He didn't see the white fangs extend themselves. When he realized what had happened, he was losing consciousness, lulled into darkness by the soft lapping of his warm blood.

THE END

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GIANT SPIDERS! (Continued from page 29)

"Come on, fella. Let's see how good you really are."

The spider advanced, then lashed out with one leg. McGuire jumped and when the hairy claw swept back he met it with a slashing swing. The ax blade, though rusty, was sharp enough to slice through the hairy mass. The spider tottered, then jumped back, its injured leg flailing the air.

"Let's see how good you are on seven legs, boy. Come and get it."

McGuire lunged. The spider jumped backwards. He thrust again, then stepped back as the spider pounced down on the patch of sand he had just vacated. Suddenly the injured leg glashed out again and slammed into his head.

He cart wheeled across the sand, landing in a clazed heap among the mesquite he had crouched near the previous night. Numbly, he ran his hand across his head, feeling the warmth of his blood and the sticky sap of the spider's body fluids. He groaned when he saw his weapon in the sand. He couldn't reach it without passing the snapping jaws.

Out of the corner of his eye, McGuire saw Liz at the side of the mountain.

"Get back!" he yelled.

"No!" she yelled back, pausing to toss a rock at the hairy monster.

The spider turned for its new adversary and McGuire broke into a lop-sided run, scooped up his weapon, and waited for the spider. When Liz dodged back into the mountain, the insect focused on McGuire again.

Avoiding the deadly swipe of its spined legs, McGuire swung and was rewarded when his blade struck the other front leg. The spider was down, but only temporarily. It rose, then floundered a second time. It began to crawl toward McGuire.

Shouting an animalistic cry of rage, McGuire ran toward the snapping jaws and, as the gory legs surrounded him in an embrace of death, he plunged his spear into the monster's head.

There was a high-pitched scream and McGuire dodged the hairy legs now intent on removing the deadly weapon. The spider lurched erect once more, then slammed to the ground.

"Is it dead?" Liz called from the mountain.

McGuire could only nod his head. A clattering roar filled his ears and

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McGuire breathed deeply to try to slow the pounding of his heart. When the noise intensified he turned to see a column of Army tanks heading across the dunes. From the turret of the leading machine, he could see a figure waving.

McGuire waved back weakly. Perhaps they had a chance after all.

THE END

MARCHING CORPSES

(Continued from page 20)

I didn't get back there for some time, but when I did, I had a most interesting conversation with a doctor. I was very pleased that the mountain climber was present to hear it, as well as most of the others who'd been in on the earlier gabfest. The doctor and I were talking about underwater diving, and its possible effect on health.

"During the first World War, I was in Odessa, at the hospital there," he said. "One of our staff, a Dr. Sikoloff, was seized by terrorists led by an American anarchist."

"The Bolsheviks helped us search. We heard that he had been murdered by the terrorists and thrown into the bay, so we offered a reward for the recovery of his body. Several divers went down and some came up quite insane, temporarily, and one or two died from strange maladies.

"Then a British destroyer lost an anchor and sent an officer down. He didn't find the anchor, but he saw a shocking spectacle, and finally was able to describe it—dead men marching on him, he said, a regiment of them, ragged, revolting, but alive. Marching as to music."

"The marching dead were really there?" I asked, as though I hadn't heard, as though I didn't believe. "Or were all those divers crazy?"

"No—not exactly," the doctor said thoughtfully, taking a long pull on his cigarette. "You see, before the Bolsheviks arrived, the terrorists imprisoned scores of men, for revenge or ransom, or whatever reason they had. Kolchak's army was there too, fighting almost everyone. What with one thing and another, the prisons were filled. The men were chained by the legs to prevent flight, with their hands left free. When the Bolsheviks arrived, the terrorists fled, but first they shot their prisoners lest they talk to the new powers. They then flung the bodies into the bay—and those are the bodies the divers saw."

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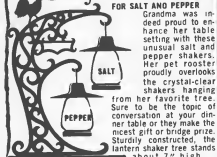
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"But they were standing up—the Marching Dead."

"They were standing because their leg-irons were so heavy that their feet were held in the mud," the doctor explained. "They didn't march, but they moved together because they were all swayed at the same time by the currents in the bay. In the end, we recovered every corpse. That's all there was to it."

"No it isn't," I said. "Such bodies should have been decomposed long before. And why were so many divers stricken?"

"All those chemicals dumped into the very cold salt waters of the bay evidently had the effect of preserving the bodies," the doctor said. "As for the maladies of the divers, that's what we started talking about, wasn't it? We never understood them fully. Possibly they can be explained by glandular action and the chemistry of fear."

"They were all brave men, accustomed to working under water," I said.

VIOLETS OF DEATH

(Continued from page 8)

once, and they can be renovated and made liveable again—ghostly flowers or not!"

"Until a week from now then." We parted and as I headed to the underground, I made several mental lists of what had to be done within the next seven days.

THE MUMMY'S EYES

(Continued from page 46)

wandering the desert in a heat-induced stupor. When they brought him before the provincial police, he could only repeat the story outlined above. But when he appeared before his backers, the World Archaeological Society, there was one addition.

"For those of you who doubt the power of Mentemhet, who neither believe in me nor in my slave's message, then heed this. For his mistake, this mortal will forfeit his life. His message has been delivered; his usefulness is finished."

Dave Logan collapsed on the polished floor. Only the whites of his eyes showed. The tendons of his throat were straining, as if he were trying to shout a warning through permanently-sealed lips.

THE END

Go slow—let 'em grow!

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"Yes, they may all have been brave, experienced, and accustomed to danger," the doctor said. "But not to the shock of what they saw. Perhaps the excessive adrenalin poured into the bloodstream already heavily charged with nitrogen due to the pressure of the water—perhaps this generated deadly poisons, but we're not sure. Those who went insane were driven to it by shock, perhaps aided by the factors mentioned

Thus a mystery, started in Odessa, was cleared up for me thousands of miles away in Chicago. The doctor's name, incidentally, was Sascha Gabrienz. I made a tape recording of our discussion later, in case any one should doubt me. At the moment, though, I wasn't interested in future doubters. I looked up to my mountain-climbing-heckler. He looked away. Crazy divers, indeed! What about climbers?

THE END

"MR. VARNEY, may I present my wife."

I bowed to a very charming woman seated behind a beautiful rosewood desk.

She got up and walked towards me, her hands outstretched. "I'm so glad to meet you, Mr. Varney."

"But this place, Mrs. Whimbly—it's incredible! In less than a week you've made fantastic improvements."

"Not so great," Whimbly cut in. "The walls were sound. All it took was a few coats of plaster and some paint. We moved in yesterday."

"And I hope never to have to go through it again. It was dreadful—cartons all over the house and no room even to unpack them. The upstairs still isn't finished and the outside of the house must be painted, of course."

"And what of your built-in air freshener?" I asked smiling.

"That's what we wish to talk to you about. You see, my wife would very much like to be taught how to 'smell' those violets."

"Yes. What made me decide was a poem by Shelley that I discovered quite by accident a few days ago. Here, I'll read it to you." Crossing the room, she went to a well-stocked bookcase and took down a leather-bound volume. Opening it to the page marked with an index card, she read:

(Continued on page 60)

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*Music, when soft voices die,
Vibrates in the memory—
Odours, when sweet violets
sicken,
Live within the sense they
quicken.
Rose leaves, when the rose is
dead,
Are heaped for the beloved's
bed;
And so thy thoughts, when
thou art gone,
Love itself shall slumber on.*

"That is a beautiful poem," I agreed. "And strange, isn't it, that Shelly should hit upon what happened in this house so many years ago."

"Whatever do you mean, Mr. Varney?"

"Sit down both of you and I'll tell you a story. I spent most of yesterday going from one historical association to another until I finally found what I wanted. In the early part of the last century, this house was owned by the captain of a clipper ship. His daughter, a girl named Melody Bronson, was in love with the first mate, a boy called Charles something or other. Anyway, there was a dreadful storm at sea and the youth was washed overboard. Melody never married and became a sort of recluse, raising flowers, playing the pianoforte, seeing no one. Eventually her father died, leaving her a sizeable fortune. Years and years and years later she, too, passed away, willing this house, as well as the others on the block, to a distant relative. His grandson was, I believe, the old gentleman who died seventy years ago and left his estate in such a muddle."

"Such a sad tale, Mr. Varney—and now more than ever I want to be able to recall that scent of violets. Is there any way at all I could be 'tuned in' on the right frequency? George mentioned something of your analogy between that and the ability to cross one's eyes. My sister taught me how to do it when we were children. Watch, I can still do it."

"Yes indeed, quite charming, Mrs. Whimbly."

"Seriously now, is there any way I can learn to be sensitive to the spirit world?"

"I'm a detective, Mrs. Whimbly, not a medium. But I must admit that I have tried several experiments in this area with varying degrees of success. If you're willing to risk it, so am I."

Everything necessary was already in the room. We started immediately and I had her remove

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her shoes and lie down. Then I hypnotized her. As I hold an advanced degree in mesmerism, there was absolutely no danger, but in the hands of an unskilled amateur, the results could be disastrous (and it is for this reason I will not go into details of how I did it).

Mrs. Whimbly was fully under the trance. I shone the soft light directly into her eyes and as quietly as possible told her how the Other World surrounds ours like a gauzy curtain.

"Spirits are all around us, my dear. Sights, sounds—yes, even certain smells, are all a product of this simultaneous existence. There is no fear if you open your mind to their presence and take them for what they are—mementos, souvenirs, gentle remembrances of the past."

With Whimbly's aid, I brought her to the third-floor room. In spite of the fresh paint the fragrance of flowers still clung to the walls.

"Breathe deeply. You can smell the violets. Breathe—now awaken!"

Mrs. Whimbly's eyelids fluttered, then snapped open. "Mr. Varney, George—I can smell them! They're beautiful. I . . ."

"What is it, Margaret?"
 "Oh my God—there's something in this room! I can feel it—I can sense it! It's horrible!" She flung herself into her husband's arms and sobbed wildly.

"Take her down, quickly!" I ordered. When they had gone, I closed the door and concentrated. No, I could feel nothing. But then, my senses weren't as acute as Mrs. Whimbly's now. And what she had felt wasn't the sweet fragrance of unseen violets.

"There has to be something else in this room," I muttered to myself, "but what? The history of the house hints at nothing violent—unless it is something that happened long before Melody's time."

The light in the room was on, so I knew that whatever was troubling the house would not be destroyed by more light. But I also realised that whenever two apparitions—in this case, the flowers and the spirit—inhabit the same space, both are in a weakened condition. Object and odour—"I've got it!" I cried.

Rapidly descending the stairs, I went into the parlour where I found Whimbly trying to calm his distraught wife.

"Do you think both of you could manage staying in a hotel tonight? I think I know how to help, but I

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won't be able to do anything until tomorrow night."

Whimbly nodded curtly and went to the phone to make a reservation. "Are you sure your plan will work," he asked while waiting for a dialtone. "Can you give us anything definite to hope for?"

"No, I'm afraid not. In this business, one must make a series of educated guesses. The supernatural never follows any set laws. But there are positive patterns, and it is these we must employ. By the way, have you any neighbors on either side of you?"

"No, not yet. The houses are all sold though—why? Will there be any danger?"

"Again, I don't know. But we've got to take that risk. I'll explain everything in further detail tomorrow night."

WE MET at the pre-arranged time of ten o'clock in front of the row house. I had suggested that Whimbly leave his wife at the hotel, and was glad to see that he had followed my advice.

"In her hysterical condition, she might upset everything. We're treading on thin ice. In fact this mightn't work."

"But it's worth a try. We've got to rid the house of this thing."

He helped me lug a heavy package up the two flights of stairs and into that little room in the corner. We sat the bulky object down and opened the paper.

"Why, it looks like a . . ."

"That's exactly what it is—a common, ordinary, run-of-the-mill thing, but I had the very devil of a time in getting it."

"I can imagine. But what do we do now?"

"Nothing—just wait. Since neither of us will be able to sense its presence, we'll have only two things to go on. You're wife became sensitive to its existence at approximately eleven o'clock, so we'll have to wait until then."

"And what's the other clue?"

"There's a law of physics that says two objects can't occupy the same space at the same time. To a limited extent, this law holds true in the supernatural world as well. We'll be able to tell when the evil ghost appears . . ."

"When the smell of violets disappears!"

We made ourselves comfortable. Every few minutes Whimbly looked at his watch and sighed. Then he'd get up and wander about the room for a while, sit down and sigh again. Client or not, he was beginning to get on my nerves.

I was about to say something to him until I noticed—"Whimbly, concentrate on the fragrance. Is it getting weaker to you?"

He stopped his roaming and sniffed, squinting his eyes as he focused on the faint odour. "I think so," he said slowly.

"And at the same time—It's almost eleven. Give me a hand."

He came over and helped me position the machine in such a way that it would cover the entire room.

"Are you ready?"

He nodded his head.

"Fine. I don't know what to expect, but I don't think we'll be in any physical danger. Get set now. I'm going to turn it on."

I flipped the switch—suddenly the whole room was encased in pure noise. We both put our hands to our ears as the siren's wail rose higher and higher in pitch.

"The smell!" Whimbly shouted over the din, "it's getting stronger!"

A white flash erupted, sending both of us to our knees; perhaps the room rocked only in our minds, but I felt the floor give way for a fraction of a second. This was the sign I had been waiting for.

I reached over and turned off the siren. Silence pounded in our ears. A moment later, Whimbly asked: "Is it over?"

"Yes, your ghost is gone. But unfortunately, so are your flowers."

He paused. "You're right. But how did we do it?"

"Simple. There was an apparition in this room that manifested itself as odour; the other was a ghost, an object. If I added the third possibility, sound, the plane of existence wouldn't be strong enough to hold all three. My theory worked. The fire engine siren blasted the violets and the black ghost into nothingness. The house now belongs completely to you and your wife. In a few days I'll be back to de-sensitize Mrs. Whimbly. She'll no longer be able to sense the spirit world."

"God—you don't know the hell she's been through in these last 24 hours. There are ghosts and apparitions all over."

"I've known that for years, Mr. Whimbly. And now both of you do also. Help me wrap this thing again and return it before anyone finds out it was gone."

"You mean you stole it?"

"Not at all. I merely borrowed it before anyone had time to lose it. And anyway, I think a little innocent borrowing is worth the sanity of a very lovely woman, don't you?"

He did.

THE END